

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SAM-01 SS-20 RSC-01

IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15

PRS-01 DRC-01 /102 W

----- 090907

R 071215Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7596

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1002

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, LA

SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL'S VISIT AND
MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL MET WITH PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA EVENING OF FEBRUARY 6 PRIOR TO SMALL DINNER PRIME MINISTER GAVE IN ASSISTANT SECRETARY'S HONOR. IN THE COURSE OF THIS MEETING PRIME MINISTER QUESTIONED ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL AT CONSIDERABLE LENGTH REGARDING SITUATION IN CAMBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM. HE WAS MOST ANXIOUS TO GET MILITARY AND POLITICAL APPRECIATION OF SITUATION IN AND AROUND PHNOM PENH AND WISHED TO DISCUSS AT LENGTH WHETHER THE U.S. HAD ANY INDICATIONS OF NVA INTENTIONS WITH REGARD TO THOSE COUNTRIES.

2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER THAT IT WAS HIS OPINION THAT THE MILITARY SITUATION AROUND PHNOM PENH APPEARED TO HAVE STABILIZED AND THAT NOT WITHSTANDING THE UNSETTLING PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF ARTILLERY AND ROCKET FIRE, THE POPULACE WAS RELATIVELY CONFIDENT. THE RISK OF A PERVADING SENSE OF DISCOURAGE-
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MENT WAS REAL BUT DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE MATERIALIZED.

3. WITH REGARD TO NORTH VIETNAM THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY EMPHASIZED THE CONTINUING AGGRESSIVE POLICY BEING PURSUED BY NORTH VIETNAM BUT EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT IF MAJOR OFFENSIVES DID NOT TAKE PLACE THIS DRY SEASON OR NEXT, HANOI MIGHT BEGIN TO SEE THE BENEFITS OF A LESS MILITANT POLICY. ON THE SUBJECT OF NORTH VIETNAM INTENTIONS TOWARD LAOS, THE PRIME MINISTER COMMENTED THAT HE HAD NO INFORMATION AND THAT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR WHO RECENTLY VISITED HANOI HAD GIVEN HIM NOTHING ON THIS SUBJECT. HE SAID HE INTENDED TO INSIST THAT HANOI KEEP ITS WORD AND WITHDRAW ITS FORCES FROM THIS COUNTRY.

4. TURNING TO THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION, THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED THE PROGRESS WHICH HAS BEEN MADE IN RECENT DAYS AND EXPRESSED HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HIS COMMENTS ON THIS MATTER HAVE BEEN SEPARATELY REPORTED.

5. AS A RESULT OF THE POLITICAL PROGRESS HE HAS MADE, THE PRIME MINISTER WAS IN GOOD FORM AND DISMISSED RATHER LIGHTLY THE STUDENT UNREST WHICH HAS ERUPTED IN SEVERAL PROVINCIAL CITIES. HE SAID HE HAD CONVOKED THE STUDENT LEADERSHIP EARLIER IN THE DAY AND HAD ENJOINED THEM NOT TO ROCK THE BOAT.

6. HAVING JUST RECEIVED PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM, THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ENJOYING THE ATTENTION FROM FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS AS REPRESENTED BY THE WHITLAM INGERSOLL VISITS. HE ASKED THAT HIS WARMEST REGARDS BE EXTENDED TO SECRETARY KISSINGER.
WHITEHOUSE

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